

## Message Text

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ACTION AF-04

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 EUR-08 NSC-05 NSCE-00 INR-05

CIAE-00 IO-06 NEA-07 PRS-01 L-01 SSO-00 INRE-00

/052 W

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O 220730Z MAR 77

FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1725

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEHRAN 2493

LIMDIS

FOR EMBASSY CAPETOWN

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SA, IR

SUBJ: SOUTH AFRICA RECOMMENDS NEW INITIATIVE IN RHODESIA

1. IN A TALK WITH FONMIN KHALATBARY ON MARCH 21 DURING WHICH WE DISCUSSED SEVERAL OTHER SUBJECTS (SEPTELS), HE TOLD ME THAT SOUTH AFRICAN FONMIN MULLER HAD SECRETLY VISITED TEHRAN LAST WEEK. DURING HIS VISIT, MULLER HAD SEEN THE SHAH AND TOLD HIM THAT THE SITUATION IN RHODESIA WAS SERIOUS BUT NOT IMPOSSIBLE. IN MULLER'S VIEW IAN SMITH IS A CHANGED MAN FROM WHAT HE WAS TWO YEARS AGO, AND SOUTH AFRICA NOW BELIEVES THAT HE IS SERIOUS ABOUT TRYING TO FIND A PEACEFUL PATH TO TRANSITION TO MAJORITY RULE. HE WOULD NEED TIME, HOWEVER, AND WOULD ONLY DEAL WITH RESPONSIBLE BLACK LEADERS SUCH AS BISHOP MUZOREWA. SMITH DID NOT BELIEVE OTHER MEMBERS OF THE COMMON FRONT WERE RESPONSIBLE, A VIEW MULLER APPARENTLY SHARES.

2. MULLER SAID THAT SOUTH AFRICA BELIEVED IT WAS TIME FOR A NEW BRITISH INITIATIVE AND THAT IT WAS ESSENTIAL THAT SUCH  
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AN INITIATIVE HAVE STRONG PUBLIC US SUPPORT. BRITISH FONMIN OWEN'S FORTHCOMING SWING THROUGH SOUTH AFRICA MAY PRESENT SUCH AN OPPORTUNITY. MULLER SAID THAT THE BRITISH'S LAST EFFORT HAD FAILED BECAUSE IVOR RICHARDS DID NOT KNOW HOW TO DEAL WITH SOUTH AFRICANS. MULLER THOUGHT THAT IF A MORE ADROIT BRITISH NEGOTIATOR COULD TAKE UP THE MATTER ONCE AGAIN WITH SMITH, A REASONABLE PLAN COULD BE

WORKED OUT WHICH SOUTH AFRICA WOULD SUPPORT ALSO.

3. KHALATBARY SAID THAT THE SHAH WAS DEEPLY CONCERNED ABOUT DEVELOPMENTS IN AFRICA, NOTING CASTRO'S RECENT TOUR THROUGH THE AREA FOLLOWED BY PODGORNYY, EVENTS IN ZAIRE AND ETHIOPIA, AS WELL AS DESTABILIZING DEVELOPMENTS ELSEWHERE. THE SHAH HOPED THAT WE WOULD GIVE MULLER'S THOUGHTS SERIOUS CONSIDERATION AND URGE THE BRITISH TO CONSIDER A NEW INITIATIVE.  
MIKLOS

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## Message Attributes

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**Review Markings:**  
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